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SIPDIS

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BAGHDAD FOR RICH HOUGHTON,
KUWAIT FOR AGGIE BERRY, PLEASE PASS TO CODEL MURTHA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [MASS](#) [PARM](#) [IR](#) [IZ](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR CODEL MURTHA'S VISIT TO TURKEY,
NOVEMBER 24-25, 2007

11. (SBU) Summary: Your visit comes on the heels of PM Erdogan's November 5 meeting with President Bush, when we promised to support effective measures to eliminate the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) terrorist threat from northern Iraq. A November 20 follow-up visit by Generals Cartwright and Petraeus here was well received. The Turks appreciate your key role in preventing House passage of an Armenian genocide resolution (H.R. 106) in October. This and our intensified cooperation against the PKK have reinvigorated bilateral cooperation. Seeking to support Middle East peace, the GOT invited President Abbas and Prime Minister Peres to an unprecedented joint visit, where both addressed the Turkish parliament. Turkey has been invited to participate in the Annapolis peace talks. However, Turkey continues to contemplate energy deals with neighboring Iran. Your visit is an ideal opportunity to emphasize that we stand with Turkey in its fight against PKK terrorism and appreciate Turkish help with the Middle East peace process, as well to remind Turkey of the dangers of a business-as-usual approach with Iran. End summary.

FIGHT AGAINST PKK TERRORISM

12. (SBU) So far this year nearly 160 Turks have been killed in PKK attacks, including 134 Turkish security personnel. Following a particularly vicious ambush in which 12 soldiers were killed and eight taken prisoner near the border in October, parliament authorized the government to launch cross-border attacks on PKK camps in Iraq. Political pressure has been building on Prime Minister Erdogan for some time to mount such a strike, and he has publicly stated that Turkey is prepared to do so in the near future.

13. (SBU) The United States has been Turkey's closest ally in the fight against the PKK, securing EU agreement to place the PKK on its list of terrorist organizations; spearheading a Europe-wide effort to close PKK financial, logistical, and media support outlets there; and leading a trilateral (US/Turkey/Iraq) process to stop the threat emanating from northern Iraq. USG pressure on Iraqi Kurdish leaders to tighten the noose on PKK operations in northern Iraq and other measures agreed to at the November 3 Iraq Neighbors Ministerial in Istanbul have helped lower the temperature.

Following his November 5 meeting with PM Erdogan, President Bush stated that the PKK is our common enemy and promised to provide Turkey with intelligence in support of effective measures against the PKK.

IRAQ

14. (SBU) Turkey worries about increasing instability in Iraq, growing Iranian influence in the region, and the potential for Iraq to splinter along sectarian or ethnic lines. The GOT is also concerned about northern Iraq's Kurdish Regional Government's (KRG) ambitions to expand its territory to include oil-rich Kirkuk Province, and see it as the prelude to creation of an independent Kurdish state. Turkish political leaders have sought to reinforce Iraq's unity and territorial integrity, and have been among the most active of Iraq's neighbors in the Iraq Neighbors Process, hosting the most recent meeting in Istanbul in early November. FM Babacan made the first high-level GOT visit to Baghdad since 2003 in October, taking Turkey's message directly to the Iraqi leadership.

15. (SBU) Turkey's agreement with the U.S. to allow the use of its territory as a logistical hub has been a combat multiplier for our Iraq operations. Approximately 25% of sustainment fuel for coalition forces crosses into Iraq through the Ground Line of Communication at Habur Border Gate. Since May 2005, when Turkey approved the use of Incirlik Air Base as a cargo hub to support coalition operations in Iraq, over 152 million pounds of equipment have been shipped to U.S. troops. Almost 75% of all air cargo into Iraq transits the Incirlik cargo hub. Six C-17 aircraft now deliver from Incirlik the amount of supplies it

originally took 9-10 planes to deliver from Germany, saving over \$160 million per year in transportation costs. Up to ten KC-135 tanker aircraft have been based at Incirlik since 2003 to support refueling operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, running over 2800 refueling sorties and delivering over 192 million pounds of fuel. You will want to express gratitude to Turkish officials for this important cooperation.

ARMENIAN RESOLUTION

6. (SBU) The House Foreign Affairs Committee vote in favor of the Armenian genocide resolution in October further inflamed already high anti-American sentiment in Turkey. Turks from all walks of life have difficulty understanding why Congress would pass judgment on historical events. Had the resolution passed the full House, the GOT was prepared to take retaliatory actions which would have affected the overall relationship -- security cooperation in particular. Turkish officials will express their appreciation to you for your role in preventing the resolution from coming to the floor.

IRAN

17. (SBU) Turkey remains concerned about the possibility of a nuclear-armed, missile capable Iran. This threat is a distant one, however, in the minds of the public and some in the government. It is overshadowed by what the Turks see as the more immediate concerns, including the need for energy resources and concern about the possible emergence of an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq. Turkey is mindful of U.S. policy on Iran and has been helpful, but argues that without a reliable, guaranteed energy supply, Turkey cannot ignore its eastern neighbor's huge reserves. Energy Minister Guler and others have stated the GOT desires to get reliable gas supplies from Turkmenistan. To date, this has proven problematic, although the GOT will continue efforts to tap this resource. We are encouraging Turkey to continue to look to the Caspian or other resource rich neighbors like Iraq, rather than Iran, to meet its growing energy demand. You can underscore the dangers of a

business-as-usual approach with Iran.

MIDDLE EAST PEACE

18. (SBU) Turkey increasingly sees itself as a player in the Middle East Peace Process, and believes it made a notable contribution prior to Annapolis by bringing Israeli President Shimon Peres and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas together in Ankara on November 13. Peres became the first Israeli leader ever to speak before a predominantly Muslim parliament when he addressed the Turkish Grand National Assembly. He praised Turkey's contributions to a lasting peace through economic programs, adding that "Turkey will be a partner in Annapolis." Abbas also acknowledged Turkey could play an effective role in finding a solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict.

POLITICAL OVERVIEW

19. (SBU) In July parliamentary elections, the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) -- in power since 2002 -- won a resounding 47.7% of the vote. In a contentious presidential election that followed, Abdullah Gul, former AKP Foreign Minister, was elected over the strong objections of the Turkish military. The AKP then launched an ambitious and controversial effort to revise the 1982 military-written constitution. A series of PKK attacks in October caused an outpouring of nationalist sentiment across the country that appeared to minimize the political differences between the AKP government and the military. The military continues to be the most widely respected public institution in Turkey. Fundamental ideological differences between the military leadership and the AKP remain, however, and the Turkish

military will continue to play a powerful role in Turkey's politics.

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WILSON